

Idaho Travel Council  
October 13 & 14, 2009  
McCall, Idaho

MINUTES

**Council Members Present**

J.J. Jaeger, Region I  
Frances Conklin, Region II  
John May, Region III  
Diane Newman, Region IV  
Bill Code, Region V  
Tadd Jenkins, Region VI  
Dick Andersen, Region VII

**Commerce Staff Present**

Karen Ballard, Administrator, Tourism  
Tina Caviness, Tourism  
Cathy Bournier, Tourism  
Peg Owens, Tourism

**Guests Present**

Tim Cochrane, McCall Chamber  
Kelly Dahlquist, NCITA  
Brett Adler, Boise Rec Fest  
Noel Lucky, The Lucky Group  
George Kelepouris, Trip Advisor  
Marsha Stearns, All West  
Bill Drake, drake/cooper  
Josh Mercaldo, drake/cooper  
Robin Gibson, drake/cooper  
Lindsay Shumate, drake/cooper

**Tuesday, October 13, 2009**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Tadd Jenkins, followed by introductions. Tim Cochrane, McCall Chamber, welcomed the council to McCall and talked briefly about the "Rediscover McCall" marketing program.

**Motion** – It was moved (Andersen) and seconded (Conklin) that the minutes of the August 3 & 4, 2009 meeting be approved as written. Motion passed.

**Director's Report** – Commerce Director Don Dietrich was unable to attend the council meeting. Karen Ballard reported on his behalf that some projects are getting very close, however credit and consumer confidence remain the drag on closure. Once again, the international component continues to figure prominently in the closest to closing. Budget issues remain a concern, particularly as the Governor, legislature and state agencies work to close the gap on the \$50 million shortfall. Dietrich does not see the shortfall having a negative impact at this point on tourism dedicated funding.

During the Governor's recent business summit, tourism panel members John Webster, Rick Hickman, Kevin Settles, Nancy DiGiammarco and Judd DeBoer briefed the Governor on issues relating to the tourism industry and provided a variety of suggestions on what state government might do to strengthen and support the industry. Karen Ballard will forward an electronic transcript consisting of

bullet points and over 100 suggestions that came out of the summit to the council. An Innovation Summit was also held that included a panel on education.

Grant Program Discussion – Karen Ballard reported to the council that the revised Grant Program Handbook will be available on-line, once the council approves it, and includes changes that staff, Anne Chambers, Bobbie Patterson, Frances Conklin, Dani Zibell-Wolfe and Amy Little worked on throughout the summer and presented to the council for review and approval during the past few meetings. Ballard said that Phase 2 will be the development of best practices and will include programs and activities that grantees are currently doing to provide great examples to other grantees.

Anne Chambers and Bobbie Patterson joined Ballard and Bournier in reviewing comments about the revised handbook to the council. Key comments about proposed revisions discussed included:

- ITC Program Requirements, page 4 – Although Anne Chambers expressed her concern that this page does not cover all requirements, Ballard assured the council that items not listed (staff time, no-net profit rule, non-exclusivity requirements and advertising design agency requirements) have been moved into the document where the context of what they apply to is addressed. Chairman Jenkins said the goal of this page is to be able to look at it to determine if an organization can comply with these items before they make the decision to apply for a grant. Details of the requirements can be found deeper in the handbook. It was agreed that the table of contents needs to match each of the chapters.
- The council directed that motions made that affect grant program rules and operations be noted in the document, along with the meeting date, until the document is ready for final publishing.
- In response to Anne Chamber's confidentiality concern with reporting staff, the council determined that proper documentation for reporting staff need only to list the position and not the person. Chairman Jenkins asked that a link be provided to the reporting form.
- Page 7, Co-op Advertising - Ballard will re-write to state that a private sector cannot use grant funds to run their own advertising campaign. A call for action must be clear.
- Page 8, Amended to state that reimbursement for an ad will require an insertion order or an invoice.
- Page 11 will clarify that advertising sales in ITC-funded collateral materials is allowed; however, advertising revenue must be deducted from total expenses before ITC funds are requested for any remaining balance. If advertising space is used as a 'member benefit' and no revenues are received, the space must be valued as if it was sold and the amount used to offset the amount requested for reimbursement.
- Page 22, Reimbursement for Major Event Sponsorship will require an invoice indicating paid in lieu of past requirement of a check for proof of payment.
- Page 28 will be edited to clarify that the Idaho out-of-state per diem be used if the city visited is not listed on the website.
- The bid requirements referred to on Page 36 will be clarified with fiscal and edited accordingly.
- Advertising costs used as cash match outlined on Page 39 will be clarified.

Motion – It was moved (May) and seconded (Code) that the changes identified above be integrated into the Grant Program Handbook to reflect the council's decisions. Motion passed.

Ballard reported to the council that Cathy Bournier has been moved into a tourism analyst position within the division and will focus primarily on research. She will provide some support to the grant

program once a new grant manager is hired. Interviews are currently being held to fill the manager position.

**All West Presentation** – During a working lunch, Marsha Stearns, All West (the tourism program's fulfillment company) presented the Idaho Tourism Leads program to the council. Key components to the program include:

- Idaho tourism suppliers may purchase lists of potential travelers to Idaho who have requested information from the Division of Tourism Development, creating a list as broad or narrow as they like from such categories as age, gender, place of residence, interests, planned travel dates and more.
- The IDT leads website, developed two years ago, is a great resource for those looking to obtain potential visitors.
- Inquires have to be within a range of one year and the minimum order is 100, at a cost of five cents per lead.
- All Idaho leads are available, or leads specific to one area such as north central or eastern Idaho can be purchased.
- Areas of interest to promote such as camping and RV, jet boating, fishing, Lewis & Clark, etc., may be selected for purchase.
- Leads are provided within a 24 hour span on weekdays.
- Leads are sent in an excel spreadsheet via e-mail.

Stearns told the council that this lead program has been proven to be one of the best marketing tools offered to Idaho's tourism industry. It is affordable and provides a great way to align with the state's marketing program. Karen Ballard told the council that Ms. Stearns will present the leads program at the Idaho Conference on Recreation & Tourism and at the Grant Summit in an effort to teach the industry how to purchase the leads and how to use them once they purchase them.

**Advertising Agency Update** – drake/cooper staff provided the council with updates on a variety of marketing programs. Key elements to those updates follow:

**Idaho Travel Council Marketing Plan 09-10**

- At over \$3 billion in domestic and international spending, the travel and tourism industry is Idaho's third largest and continues to grow in size and importance.
- To have a healthy industry and to compete for today's tourism dollar, state must be marketed effectively. This responsibility is managed by the Idaho Department of Commerce, Division of Tourism Development, with the advice of the Idaho Travel Council.
- By law, travelers pay a 2% room tax on hotels, motels and private campgrounds, thus generating funds used to market Idaho.
- The 2009-2010 marketing plan details the overall marketing and financial objectives and identifies the program and strategies for achieving these objectives. The plan also provides a discussion of key issues that impact the marketing of Idaho, and addresses programs identified in the Strategic Work Plan for the Tourism Division, including the Governor's Project 60, which sets for a larger, more comprehensive plan to grow Idaho's Gross Domestic Product to \$60 billion.

**Adventures in Living (AIL) Campaign**

- Editing phase should be completed by the end of October culminating with a final edited product or show.
- Web Site Plan, including creation and outline of the final micro-site and a content plan, to be presented to the department next week.
- Adventures in Living Brand/Marketing overall media plan and teaser campaign and how AIL is incorporated into Visit Idaho currently in development.
- Social media teaser and PR campaigns tentative set for December and January
- Launch of site and show will be simultaneous in early Spring (tentatively February)
- Prime Season Integrated Media Plan launched in Spring

#### **Travel Guide Update and Cover Selection**

- 12 pages removed from 2010 guide; new co-ops with multiple partners; more advertisers using smaller ad sizes; most advertisers did renew; less than 10 did not renew based on available dollars or other consolidations
- Delivery date estimated for the end of December.
- Budget is \$165,000; nearly \$12,000 saving with 12-page cut

At the August meeting, the council requested drake/cooper to provide them with more cover photo options to choose from. After reviewing four options, the council moved to select a photo that features a girl and canoe.

**Motion** – It was moved (Jaeger) and seconded (Conklin) to select a photo taken in the heart of the Sawtooth Mountains in Pettit Lake of a father and daughter playing in a grassy field after canoeing for the 2010 Idaho Travel Guide Cover. Motion passed.

#### **FY10 Prime Media Plan**

- Campaign consists of prime magazine and prime online
- Objectives are to raise awareness of Idaho as a vacation destination; generate inquiries to VisitIdaho.org and the 1-800-VISIT-ID number; and showcase and encourage viral sharing of the new Adventures in Living footage
- Target Audience includes families (females age 35-54); boomers (adults age 50-70); and niche (RV, adventure, golf)
- Magazines and websites that have been high performers in the past were chosen for the campaign
- Ad size reduced from last year to maximize frequency with a reduced media budget
- Magazine co-ops designed as full page ads; require 3 partners; and will be placed in magazine with strong circulation and editorial serving the Northwest
- Total magazine program budget \$1,025,282
- Prime online strategy includes websites with strong historical results as well as creative and rich media capabilities with a focus on standard ad placements
- Program targets users in specific locations based on ideal product/market demographics
- Total online budget \$349,717

Council member Dick Andersen requested that the Golf Digest magazine ad be moved to March or April, as February is too early. Drake/Cooper will make that adjustment.

Meeting adjourned for the day.

**Wednesday, October 14, 2009**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Tadd Jenkins, followed by welcome and introductions.

**Grant Amendments** – The council acted on the following amendments presented by Cathy Bournier:

**Post Falls Chamber** – It was moved (Jaeger) and seconded (Code) to shift \$4,000 from Element 4: Print Advertising into Element 5: Print Piece/Activity Guide increasing the total in element 5 to \$6,000. Motion passed.

**Boise CVB** – It was moved (May) and seconded (Code) to amend the Boise CVB grant award to remove specific earmarks for marketing, communications, special event support and cultural community co-op programs and allow flexibility for use of the funds within the specific elements. Motion passed.

**Tax Commission Discussion** – John May and Karen Ballard briefed the council on meeting with Idaho Tax Commission staff to discuss a variety of issues pertaining to the 2% hotel/motel/campground tax. Council member May told the council that a variety of issues were discussed including the formula the commission uses to base collection fees; how the tax is collected; ensuring new businesses are added to the tax collection when they open; and a timeline on reporting. May and Ballard also discussed the procedure of collecting past due fees, penalties and interest from those who are not rightfully collecting and paying the tax. Tax Commission staff will investigate procedures currently in place to accomplish that. The Tax Commission has a lot of information that would be helpful to the staff and council for analytical purposes and in turn, May said we have a brochure that could be edited for them to use to show hoteliers a better understanding of what these collections are for. Frances Conklin expressed her concern that collection reports have not been available since August. Karen Ballard said part of the problem is the lack of personnel assigned to the tourism collection program but the commission seems very willing to work with staff and the council to try and develop a memorandum of understanding that will outline specific responsibilities and methods for determining fees paid to the commission. Ballard and May will continue to work with the Tax Commission staff and provide updates to the council.

**Idaho Regional Travel and Convention Grant Program Rules** – Cathy Bournier reported to the council that the proposed rule changes to the ITC Grant program have been cleared through the Legislative Services Office and encouraged council members to visit with the respective representatives about supporting the changes.

**Golf Market Update** – Noel Lucky, The Lucky Group, provided the council with information about her publications which include Golf Digest and Golf World. According to the Golf Digest Publications' Research Resource Center:

- Nearly 61% of golfers state that the reputation of golf in Idaho is a decision factor when planning a vacation.
- When making arrangements for travel, 56% of golfers refer to magazines for information.
- Golfers plan on spending 5 days on their next golf vacation, playing approximately 4 rounds of golf.
- Besides golf, golfers enjoy participating in other leisure activities such as shopping, fine dining/wine activities, museums/historical sites, and gambling.
- 92% of golfers plan to play more or the same level of golf in the next 12 months.

- 97% of golfers said that golf would be the last thing they would give up in a sustained recession. Lucky told the council that most people make their golf travel plans in March, April and May. Karen Ballard told the council that there are co-op opportunities that are being explored including winery and fly fishing packages that include golf.

**Idaho Conference on Recreation & Tourism** – Karen Ballard told the council that Diane Norton will take the planning lead on the May 4, 5, and 6, 2010 conference that will be held in Boise at the DoubleTree Riverside. Norton will work with the Boise CVB, perhaps a couple regions of the forest service, and the Department of Parks & Recreation. Ballard said the possibility of having a scenic byway retreat the day before the conference begins is being explored, along with significant training for restaurants. Speaker and agenda updates will be provided at the January council meeting.

**Trip Advisor** – George Kelepouris presented information about TripAdvisor to the Council.

Highlights of his presentation follow:

- TripAdvisor was founded in February 2000 as an unbiased resource to research and plan all aspects of travel (where to go, where to stay, how to get there, and what to do when you arrive)
- TripAdvisor is the world's largest online travel guide and ranked #1 of all Travel Information websites by Comscore, and consistently ranked in the top 5 of ALL travel websites
- Over 19 million unique travelers visit TripAdvisor.com per month and create 330+ million page views
- TripAdvisor's content includes over 25 million unbiased reviews and opinions; over 5,000 new reviews created daily; and 13 million+ registered members.
- By destination, TripAdvisor provides user reviews of:
  - 71,528 Cities
  - 462,723 Hotels
  - 93,460 Attractions
  - 581,272 Restaurants
- Key user features include interactive maps; traveler lists; comprehensive destination guides; weekend getaway ideas; and weather forecasts.
- Links to online travel agents, hotels and airlines
- Idaho content on TripAdvisor includes:
  - 934 Hotels & Accommodations reviewed
  - 237 Things to Do
  - 1,515 Restaurants
  - More than 689 topics discussed in the Idaho Forums
- Idaho channel travel on TripAdvisor included 78,102 unique visitors and over 331,489 page views (August '09 traffic logs)
- Display media opportunities allow clients to pinpoint target audience
- TripAdvisor will work with each client to identify key objectives, and in turn, build a custom co-branded microsite to drive audience engagement and interactivity.

Mr. Kelepouris closed his presentation by telling the council that TripAdvisor also has co-opportunities developed and he will be sharing that information at the Grant Summit in February. He also has research available and will leave that with Ms. Ballard.

## **Other Business**

Karen Ballard reported to the council that the Department of Commerce closed the Japan Office, but Akemi Harima will continue on payroll to answer the phones. The Australia media Fam trip was very successful resulting in a significant number of travel articles.

The next council meeting will be January 19 and 20 in Boise. Proposed agenda items include an international program report from Nancy Richardson and a media update from Kellie Kluksdal. A joint meeting with the Economic Advisory Council will be held on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

John May told the council that he is prepared to draft a letter to the Joint Finance Appropriations Committee on the council's behalf voicing their disapproval of money taken from the tourism budget for economic development programs.

Karen Ballard told the council that there will be no hold backs on salaries this fiscal year. If forced to reduce our payroll, it will cause tourism staff to go on furloughs. Ballard asked council members to speak to their legislators asking them not to take these cuts out of dedicated funds.

Motion – It was moved (Code) and seconded (Jaeger) that the meeting be adjourned. Motion passed.